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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, July 2, 1930

Not for Publication

Subject: "Furnishing the Nursery." From Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor. Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available; "Infant Care" and "Eggs at Any Meal."

--ooOoo--

How shall we furnish the baby's room? A young mother wants to know. I have sent her a copy of "Infant Care," the valuable book published by the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor. In this book, I think she will find a good answer to her question. She is living in an apartment now, but expects to move to a house just outside the city, next year.

That's good -- for it's quite a problem to bring up a child in a city apartment. A baby may get along fairly well, in a flat or apartment, until he is two or three years old, then he needs more room.

Of course the ideal home for children is sunny, well ventilated, and dry. There's a sunny yard or porch where the children may play, and where the baby may have sun baths.

As for the nursery -- the baby's room -- it should be bright and sunny, for a child needs sunshine, just as a plant does. Like a plant, the child will droop and pine, without plenty of sunshine. Windows opening to the south, southeast, or southwest will admit the sun for many hours of the day.

Temperature must be considered, also. A very young baby, or a delicate one, requires a warmer room than one older, or more robust. For the first few weeks, keep the daytime temperature between 65 and 70 degrees. At night it may fall from 10 to 15 degrees lower, if the baby is properly dressed and protected. In winter, the temperature of his room should be kept as even as possible. In summer, when it is very hot, the baby should be kept in the coolest part of the house or porch, and he should wear only the lightest clothing, such as a band and diaper.

Is the baby's room well ventilated? It should be. If the nursery has doors and windows on opposite sides of the room, a cross current is set up when they are opened, and the room is quickly filled with fresh air. When there is only one window, and the door opens into a hall, you can get a cross current by opening doors and windows of other rooms, at the same time.

The baby's room should be kept scrupulously clean, of course. If the house is old, paint or paper the nursery. Bare floors are easily kept clean. Linoleum may be used on old floors; it is easily cleaned. Washable rugs may be used, but heavy rugs and carpets are not suitable. When the baby is old enough to play on the floor, he may sit on a mat, or a heavy blanket, folded. A clean comfort may be used as a mat.

In the book on "Infant Care," there is a list of ~~the~~ important furnishings for the baby's room. The list is too long to broadcast. There are also suggestions about the baby's bed, and directions for making a dressing table.

The next question is about toys for the baby. Reminds me that it's only a few months till Christmas. When you buy gifts for children -- for your own children, your nieces, your nephews, or your grandchildren -- remember that a baby wants to put everything in his mouth. Toys should be washable, with no sharp points or corners, to hurt the eyes. Painted articles and hairy and woolly toys are unsafe, such as are also toys small enough to be swallowed, and those having loose parts, such as bells. It's hard for some grown-ups to believe that a baby would rather have a string of spools and a big pie tin than the most expensive gift ever manufactured for the Christmas trade.

Rubber toys which may be washed are excellent. Floating toys of celluloid are interesting, but the baby may bite them to pieces.

Never give a child so many toys at one time that his attention is distracted. He will be quite satisfied with a few things. A handful of clothespins, for example, will please him just as much as an expensive doll, or other toy. Some mothers have a special box or basket, in which to keep empty spools and other household objects which will amuse the baby. Among these toys are a string of spools, a spoon, a pie tin to pound, a string of wooden beads, and empty talcum powder cans.

The next question is about stockings, and shoes. Stockings, after washing, should be one-half inch longer than the baby's foot. Therefore, to allow for shrinking, it is wise to buy them at least three-fourths inch longer. A loop of tape may be sewed to the top of each stocking, through which to slip the safety pin that holds them to the diaper.

Now, about the shoes. As soon as an infant tries to stand, and before he learns to walk, he should begin to wear shoes fastening around the ankle. Shoes with soles that are firm, flat, and moderately flexible, of medium weight, made of rough leather, such as elk hide, so as not to be shiny nor slippery. Such a sole permits the baby's foot to take its natural position. The soles of moccasins are too soft, causing the baby's feet to curl up at the sides. With a firm sole, this cannot take place.

Shoes should always be long enough so that the toes are not crowded, but have complete freedom of motion. They should always be at least one-half inch longer than the baby's foot, and one-fourth inch wider at the toes. As soon as the child's foot grows so that his toes nearly touch the end of the shoes, new ones longer should be bought. The mother should examine the baby's feet frequently, and if his toes are found to be overlapping or turned under, larger shoes are needed.

Well, children must eat, as well as be clothed. We'll have to stop talking about shoes and stockings, and see about dinner. How about an omelet today? Lots of fresh eggs in the ice-box -- we might as well use some of them today. Potatoes and cabbage in the vegetable bin. They'll be good with an omelet. And for dessert -- I haven't a thing for dessert today! No fresh fruit, no ice cream -- I have it! There's a package of junket I've been saving for some time. Caramel junket for dessert.

Now let's get this meal in order: Omelet; Scalloped Potatoes; Buttered Quick Cooked Cabbage; and Caramel Junket. As you know, there are directions for making junket in any package of junket tablets. There are recipes for the potatoes and the cabbage in the Radio Cookbook, and directions for making omelets in the Egg Leaflet. Do you have a copy of the egg leaflet, "Eggs at Any Meal"? There's a whole page devoted to omelets. Omelets fluffy, and omelets flat, are made of the same ingredients; One egg for each person, 1 tablespoon of milk for each egg, and salt to taste. For a fluffy omelet, beat the egg yolks and whites separately; for a flat omelet, beat them together. Don't forget, when you cook eggs, that the secret of success is to cook them slowly, at moderate, even heat.

And, lest you forget, our menu for children's day is as follows: Omelet; Scalloped Potatoes; Buttered Quick-Cooked Cabbage; and Caramel Junket.

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